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Betts, Charles Henry

Presidential address of Charles H. Betts

Lyons, N.Y.

[1914]

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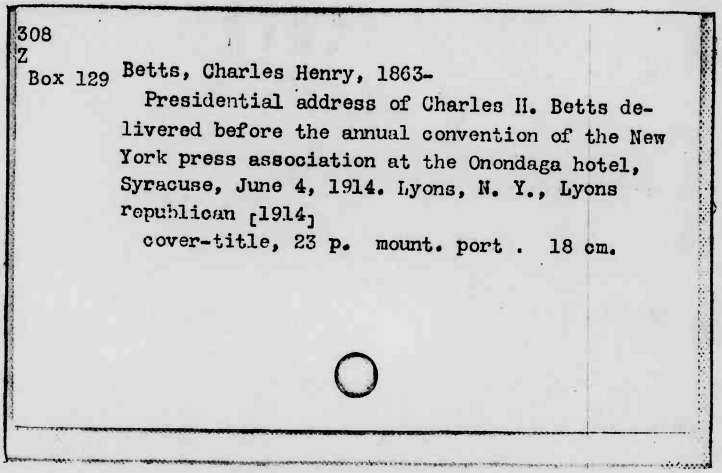

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Box 129 Betts, Charles Henry, 1863-
Presidential address of Charles H. Betts delivered before the annual convention of the New York press association at the Onondaga hotel, Syracuse, June 4, 1914. Lyons, N. Y., Lyons republican [1914]
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PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

of

CHARLES H. BETTS

Delivered before the Annual Convention of the New York Press Association at the Onondaga Hotel, Syracuse, June 4, 1914

THE LYONS REPUBLICAN
Lyons, New York

CHARLES H. BETTS
President of the New York Press Association

Oct Sept 6. 1923.
AL

Presidential Address of Charles H. Betts, delivered before the annual convention of the New York Press Association at Syracuse, N. Y., June 4, 1914.

Members of the New York Press Association:

I want to take this opportunity to say that I am in favor of votes for women. I am in favor of intellectual liberty and political equality. I know of no reason why talents and capabilities should be suppressed and hidden under a bushel simply because they happen to be possessed by a woman.

One of the main arguments urged against extending the franchise to women is the one to the effect that because women cannot go to war, therefore, they should not be permitted to vote. This sounds plausible on the face of it unless you stop to think. When your gray matter gets to work you will then be able to discover that if there were no women there would be no soldiers. You will also discover that it is quite as important to supply a soldier as to be one. If you keep on thinking and supplement your thinking by a little intelligent reflection you will finally arrive at the correct conclusion that every hero who ever stood or fell in the ranks of an army was his mother's substitute.

The Yellow Age

Literature is the expression of a nation's life, the shadow of the people's character, therefore, the trashy literature of our time is evidence of mental if not moral deterioration.

It is a matter of regret that the future historians will be compelled to characterize this as the yellow age.

We are living in the age of yellow journals, of yellow magazines and of yellow dogs. This trio of yellows hold the center of the stage with demagogues as end men, and they are conducting the most spectacular vaudeville ever witnessed by the world. Throughout all of our present day literature, especially the large sensational newspapers and magazines and much of the light fiction, there is the saffron tint and all through our politics, the nation over, goes scurrying to and fro, the yellow dog.

INTENTIONAL SECOND EXPOSURE

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It matters not whether it is the sanctimonious editor of the *Ladies' Home Journal* discussing the science of eugenics, the notoriety seeking editor of *Collier's Weekly* attacking patent medicines, the uplift editor of *Harper's Weekly* discussing the desirability of easy divorces, or the editors of sensational newspapers and magazines publishing the private letters of public men secured from literary thieves and purchased perjurers, they are all animated by one and the same spirit and they are all tinged with yellow.

The motive back of all this sensationalism is greed and the object graft. It is all done to increase circulation and add to cash receipts by inflaming passion and appealing to morbid curiosity. While denouncing corruption and graft in politics these papers and magazines become the leaders of graft by corrupting the public mind in order to get the people's money.

Many of them indulge in fiendish attacks, with an utter disregard of truth, not only upon the character and reputation of our public men but upon our representative government and American institutions. They collect scandal and pile up falsehoods for the express purpose of coining them into cash and then they circulate them in the name of virtue and reform. There is and there can be no lower or more despicable calling.

The latest acquisition of this style of journalism is the moral and political bankrupt who turns informer, liar and character assassin for a consideration. The editorial scavengers who have inaugurated this system of journalism have put themselves on the same level with the purchased perjurers, the same as the bribe-giver is as guilty as the bribe-taker.

There ought to be a federal law enacted making it a crime punishable by imprisonment to steal the private letters of a public man and it should be made equally a crime to publish such letters except when they form a part of a court record or a part of the record of an investigation. If the ablest statesmen and lawyers of this country and Europe honestly and conscientiously differ in regard to the interpretation of a section of a treaty drawn by experts; if the best legal talent is divided so as to give a directly opposite interpretation to such an instrument, how easy it must be to misconstrue and misrepresent the private letters of a public man.

I want to express my admiration for the thousands of decent and honestly conducted newspapers in the country that are steadily and conscientiously furnishing the public with reliable news and accurate information and are intelligently commenting upon and fairly discussing public questions and the conduct of public men. They are doing a grand work and they are a leading, creative and constructive force in carrying forward the cause of good government and advancing the progress and civilization of the world. But on the other hand I have nothing but contempt for the sensational, muck-rake newspapers and magazines which for the most part are echoes of ignorance, vehicles of malice, and manufacturers of falsehoods. They are the corrupters of the public mind, the debauchers of public morals and the destroyers of business prosperity. They are a disgrace to the profession and a curse to the age and to humanity.

Is mankind advancing? In science, in discovery, in invention, in benevolence and in charity, yes. In literature and in statesmanship, emphatically No! The classical literature of the past is succeeded by the trashy literature of the present and as for statesmanship, where are the American Washingtons, Hamiltons, Websters and Lincolns? They live only in the memory of man.

The Duty of an Editor

I want to say a few words in regard to what I conceive to be the duty of an editor. There is a wide difference of opinion on this subject.

In these days of commercialism, in these days of large circulation obtained by catering to sensationalism, the general and perhaps the popular view relative to the conducting of a newspaper is that it should be conducted on a strictly commercial basis. This seems to be a tendency of the times and it is a most dangerous tendency. It is a tendency which if not checked will eventually result in the demoralization of society and the ruin of the Republic. When the public press substitutes cash for ideals of unselfish service to the public and when it prostitutes patriotism for circulation, the Republic is on the edge of chaos and red-handed anarchy lurks just around the corner.

It is for this reason that I wish to impress upon you the importance of giving this subject serious consideration. We, as

editors, should look higher than the cash register and should remember our obligations to our country and to humanity. We cannot escape the responsibility of our position. We are either the informers or the misinformers of the people. We are the moulders of public opinion to a greater extent than we often realize. It is this fact that should make us pause and think seriously of our responsibility and our duty.

So far as I can see the editor who conducts his newspaper solely for the money there is in it places himself on the same low level as the political boss who goes into politics for the express purpose of "working for his own pocket book all the time." There is no difference and there can be no moral distinction between the purely commercial editor and the purely commercial politician. And yet it often happens that it is the commercial editor who cries out the loudest against the commercial politician. In fact, his cry against the political boss is nine times out of ten inspired by his own ambition to take the place of the boss. The volume and intensity of his cry is a reflection of his own mind and betrays his purpose. His attack is usually made upon the commercial politician because he sees a prospect of the politician securing the very graft that he is after. This is the reason that the commercial editor becomes so excited. You can always get a line on the intensity of his appetite for graft by the noise he makes and the same thing is true relative to the political demagogue. They are two of a kind. They are the twin brothers of the commercial political boss.

The commercial editor, the commercial political boss and the office-seeking demagogue are the trinity of evils that menace the stability of our institutions and threaten the overthrow of the Republic.

I am glad to find in a speech delivered by Melville E. Stone, the able manager of the Associated Press, my own sentiments on this subject clearly and admirably expressed. In his speech delivered at the Columbia School of Journalism, Mr. Stone said:

Finally by the adoption of the first amendment to the Federal Constitution it was provided that there should never be anything done to abridge the freedom of speech or the freedom of the press in this country.

Our fathers at the beginning recognized thus early how essential this right of speech and right of printing was to our American liberty. But it carries with it a reciprocal responsibility which if we be at all fair minded, we must recognize. A distinguished Russian has spoken of the despotism of the printed phrase—and it is undeniably true that a thing in print is far more pregnant of possibilities than the same thing in ordinary speech—"To us, men have committed much, and of us they will ask the more." We are bound to do something more than to print and sell newspapers for profit. We owe a duty to our country, which is larger than that we owe to our counting rooms, and this I conceive to be the first lesson which should and ought to be taught to anyone having in mind the pursuit of this business of American journalism. If we are to do nothing more than to furnish mere entertainment for the public, then we fall to the level of the lowest panderer.

It is refreshing to read these sentiments expressed by the head of one of the greatest newsgathering bureaus in the world. It gives us hope that the time is at hand for a reaction to set in against the mad craze for sensationalism and commercialism. This hope is increased by the stirring appeal made by Mr. Stone to the publishers of the country to banish from their columns, as far as possible, sensational news. He quotes approvingly from an address delivered by Fisher Ames, one of the Revolutionary fathers, as follows:

Every horrid story in a newspaper produces a shock; but, after some time, this shock lessens. At length, such stories are so far from giving pain that they rather raise curiosity and we desire nothing so much as the particulars of terrible tragedies.

Now, Messrs. Printers, I pray the whole honorable craft to banish as many murders and horrid accidents, and monstrous births, and prodigies from their gazettes as their readers will permit them, and by degrees to coax them back to contemplate life and manners; to consider common events with some common sense; and to study nature where she can be known, rather than in those of her ways where she really is, or is represented to be inexplicable.

Strange events are facts, and as such should be mentioned but with brevity and in a cursory manner. They afford no ground for popular reasoning or instructions; and, therefore, the horrid details that make each particular hair stiffen and stand upright on the reader's head

ought not to be given. In short, they must be mentioned; but sensible printers and sensible readers will think that way of mentioning them the best that impresses them least on the public attention, and that hurries them on the most swiftly to be forgotten.

In commenting upon this, Mr. Stone says:

I am impressed that this address could have been delivered with greater profit in this very hour.

Mr. Stone then goes on to say that the American people are "news mad." He might have added that many of the newspapers are scandal crazy. He calls attention to the fact that the editors of today do not compare with the editors of 70 years ago, that many of them when they have filled their columns with a mass of the details of sensational news sit back with self-complacency and imagine they are masters of the craft. And then he adds:

The self-constituted leaders and enlighteners of the people—what are they doing? Standing still, lost in self-admiration, while the hosts march by? Are they even doing as well as that? Is it not a fact that the editors of seventy years ago were, as a rule, better informed in law, politics, government and history than those of today? The statesmen and lawyers and political students who used to do editorial work for ambition or intellectual pleasure have ceased to frequent the newspaper offices.

Mr. Stone tells the exact truth and I advise every editor of this country to procure a copy of his admirable address and read it carefully. He realizes, as every thoughtful student of history must realize, that we are headed for the political insane asylum largely due to the misinformation furnished the public by editors of newspapers. One of the chief assets of the sensational newspaper is the self-exploiting political demagogue. He keeps the first page supplied with headlines. The greatest circulation boomers are the criminals and the political demagogues.

It is the editor's duty to study and investigate all important questions which relate to the improvement of conditions and the welfare of his country. It is his duty to make the study and research necessary to obtain accurate information on such questions and then give that information to the people without fear or favor. The editor should be the real teacher, the true educator. He should inform and enlighten his own mind so that he can inform and enlighten the people. When he has arrived at a conclusion that he believes to be right, he should announce that conclusion without regard to consequences. If he does not do so he is not honest with himself and he is not honest with the public for he cheats the people out of the benefit of his honest judgment which it is their right to have.

The editor who has not the courage to challenge and fight uninformed clamour is not worth a fig to his profession or to his country. It is his duty to follow the example of the true statesman and point out the mistakes and errors of the multitude and give the people the truth, give them correct information when he sees they are acting on false information. If he does not do so he is not the friend of the people for he is not honest with them and he places himself on a level with the political demagogue. If the editor pursues this course, however, he will make enemies. But it is his duty to make enemies. It is his duty to make friends and enemies and to have them both strong and both selected. He cannot fight the battle of the right without making enemies of those who are fighting the battle of the wrong. He must either fight wrong or compromise with it. A brazen falsehood and a timid truth are the parents of compromise.

Public Sentiment

We hear a great deal in these days about public sentiment. Everybody is afraid of public sentiment. It is public sentiment that makes cowards of us all and yet there is not one man in ten thousand who has any correct idea of what public sentiment really is.

This is the reason we are all the time having legislation and conducting the government on what the people do not know instead of on what their representatives do know. This is what is constantly clogging the machinery of government with ignorance and incompetency. It is this everlasting craze to bow down, worship and follow public sentiment without regard to whether the sentiment is informed, uninformed or misinformed; without any regard to whether the sentiment is right or wrong, which has resulted in filling our statute books with abortive laws and is creating a deplorable situation in which the hands and feet of the

people are being tied with red tape, their pocket books are being robbed by additional taxation and prosperous business concerns are being choked to death by fool legislation.

How can we have intelligent legislation and good government in response to uninformed or misinformed sentiment? We can only have good legislation and good government by acting on correct information in response to informed, enlightened public sentiment. This is exactly what we are not doing. We are substituting the noise of clamour for the light of reason. The time has come when we must begin to discriminate between informed and uninformed public sentiment, between true and false public sentiment, if we ever expect to improve conditions and secure intelligent legislation and good government.

The unfortunate part of the situation is that nearly all politicians are cowards and many public men are slaves to their own selfish ambitions. They are like the Missouri Congressman who said:

I find it a great deal easier to do wrong than to explain to my constituents why I did right.

The greatest evil in public life is cowardice. We are having government by cowardly weathercocks. All you have to do is to make a little noise and you can, at any time, send the cowardly politicians and the timid public officers scurrying to the cyclone cellar. The editors of yellow journals have discovered this and so they manage to create the noise and then they drive the cowardly representatives of the people in any direction they want them to go. This explains why we are having legislation and government in response to ignorant headlines. The guidance of the intelligent, experienced and patriotic statesman has been cast aside for the guidance of the ignorant editor, whose only qualification to lead is the fact that he possesses a keen nose for scandal, bright eyes for headlines and ears attuned only to noise.

The question is, what is public sentiment? Is it the ignorant, unreasoning clamour of the street inspired by sensational headlines? Or is it that wide, well informed, intelligent, sane sentiment inspired by knowledge which pervades every community and modestly declines to express itself upon the street through the ever open mouth of credulity?

There is a vast difference between healthy, informed, enlightened public sentiment and curious, ignorant, public clamour. The first is like heaven's refreshing rain and life-giving sunshine; the second is like earth's dust and refuse in a whirlwind. This difference, however, will never be discovered by cowardly politicians and office seeking demagogues whose sole ambition it is to take care of themselves at the public expense. They are ready to be blown in any direction by every passing breeze. They are ready to enter any port that will insure them temporary safety.

One man with an empty head and a loose tongue talking on the streets will make more noise and more apparent public sentiment than 500 sane, intelligent, thinking citizens who do not agree with him but remain silent.

Burke expressed this idea beautifully when he said:

Because half a dozen grasshoppers under a fern make the field ring with their importunate chink, while thousands of great cattle reposed beneath the shadow of the British oak, chew the cud and are silent, pray do not imagine that those who make the noise are the only inhabitants of the field.

We are apt to mistake uninformed surface clamour for enlightened public sentiment. The false clamour of today becomes the passing vapor of tomorrow. Clamour is based upon error, emotion and hysteria, while true public sentiment is based upon accurate information, ripe deliberation and intelligent reflection. The question is which kind of sentiment should guide and control our legislation and government?

We are now passing through a transition period. We are in the throes of a bloodless revolution. It is at such times as this when the demagogues flock to the front and become the temporary leaders of the people. It has been so in all history.

When the people are excited; when they are easily swayed by passion, it is the political demagogue who comes forth and swears that their ignorance is wisdom and that their prejudice is patriotism. Not because he loves the people but because he loves position and power and is willing to deceive and fool the people in order to obtain a public office even if he is obliged to sacrifice his manhood by advocating measures against his own honest convictions.

It is fortunate for the world that statesmen are cast in a different mould. In times of excitement and hysteria it is only the statesman who stands erect. It is he who refuses to kneel. It is he who expresses his honest thoughts. It is he who points out the errors and mistakes of the multitude and tries to educate and enlighten the people by telling them the truth. Not because he loves himself but because he loves and serves the right and because he is the real friend of the people and insists on serving their true interests even against their will. Clamour may threaten him, the ignorant may denounce him, the yellow journals may attack him, but the statesman, the real reformer, cannot be driven from conviction's field.

The patriotic statesman is always patient and long suffering. He can afford to wait. He knows that passion will cool, that clamour will pass away, that ignorance will be swept aside by increasing knowledge and that in the end enlightened public sentiment will prevail.

When that time comes, as it surely will come and as it always has come, he knows that his position will be vindicated and that upon his brow will be placed the laurel wreath while the cowardly demagogues who cringe and crawl and who sacrifice their honest convictions upon the altar of fear and misrepresent the real interests of the people to obtain an office will finally be driven back to private life by the whip of public scorn.

Speaking of two ancient demagogues, Aristotle said:

Both of these persons were subsequently condemned to death; for the people, even if they are deceived for a time, in the end generally come to detect those who beguile them into an unworthy action.

The Menace of Socialism

We are living in a very large world filled to overflowing with all kinds of conflicting theories and it is no easy task for any man to pick out the true from the false, the sound from the unsound. It requires patient study, thorough investigation and endless research to arrive at correct conclusions on important public and governmental questions.

One of the most attractive and at the same time one of the most dangerous doctrines of our time and one that is fast becoming popular is the theory of Socialism. It is a plausible

theory. It is a seductive theory because it appeals to our sentiment instead of our sense, to our emotion instead of our reason, and this accounts for its wide popularity.

The theory of Socialism reduced to the last analysis means that the individual exists for the state and not the state for the individual. In other words that the passengers exist for the sake of the ship and not the ship for the sake of the passengers. Therefore, Socialists contend that the interest of the individual must be sunk in the interest of the community This theory is based on the sophism that you can raise up and improve mankind in the mass, when the fact is you can only raise up and improve the mass by first elevating and improving the individuals who compose the mass. The theory of Socialism if put into operation would result in an intolerable form of slavery. Each individual would be the slave of the state which in the end would mean that each individual would be the slave of the politicians who controlled the state. Let it be remembered that under Socialism we would have exactly the same human nature to deal with and exactly the same people to deal with that we have now. The trouble with Socialism is that by submerging the individual in the community it would destroy ambition, kill individual initiative and result in the fossilization of society.

Socialism without the introduction into it of absolute state authority would result in chaos and anarchy and with such authority it would be the most damnable kind of slavery.

As Lord Acton has well said:

Under Democratic Socialism what the slave is in the hands of his master, the individual citizen would be in the hands of the community.

The whole aim of Socialism is to take the tools of production out of the hands of the competent who are now successfully directing the work of production and put them in the hands of the incompetent. Civic chaos, political anarchy and industrial bedlam would be the result.

We are fond of saying that all men are created free and equal, when as a matter of fact there are only two periods in life when men are equal. The first is when they enter this world through the gate of eternity and the second is when they leave

this world through the same gate. Between the two eternities all men are unequal because nature has made them so.

Nature distributes her gifts with a secret and subtle hand and we can no more change nature's distribution of talent, wisdom and virtue by law than we can change her distribution of physical form and beauty.

There is equal voice only among the dumb;
Equal minds only among the fools;
Equal success only among the failures,
And equal strength only among the dead.

All that any man can ask of the government is to give him equal protection and equal opportunity and then his success or failure will depend upon himself.

Representative vs. Direct Democracy

A pure or direct democracy is one in which the people try to administer the government directly themselves without the aid of any secondary means. The result is government by collective ignorance characterized by noise and disorder. This was the form of democracy that led to the ruin of all the ancient Republics.

A representative democracy is one in which the people conduct the government through chosen representatives selected on account of their ability and fitness to do the particular thing the people want done. The result is government by selected intelligence characterized by maturity, stability and order. This is the form of democracy that has made America the greatest nation in the civilized world.

I wish right here to call your attention to the difference between the people's will and the people's way. The people's will should prevail. But how should it prevail? Should it prevail through channels of intelligence and order or through channels of ignorance and disorder. This is the important point and it constitutes the difference between a representative democracy and a pure democracy.

A pure democracy means government through the channels of ignorance and disorder. A representative democracy means government through the channels of intelligence and order.

Let me illustrate the difference between the people's will and the people's way. Suppose you should will to build a house. Let us suppose you want a new house and you have the money to pay for it. Your will should prevail. But how, directly or indirectly? Can you build the house yourself? Not by any means. The first thing you must do is to secure an architect to draw the plans and specifications to carry out your will. Do you not see that your will is one thing and your way is another? You cannot draw the plans, not because you are not intelligent, but because you have not studied that particular branch of science and have not the necessary information on the subject. Therefore you must employ a representative to act for you who has the technical knowledge to carry your will into effect. In order to build your house according to the plans and specifications you must then hire as your representatives carpenters, masons, plumbers and decorators. In other words, if you want a good house you must act through representatives who have the necessary information and technical knowledge to build a good house.

Well, the people, if they want good government, must do exactly the same thing. They must employ as representatives intelligent and capable men. They cannot act for themselves in conducting legislation and government any more than you can act for yourself in building a house. If an individual cannot act directly for himself in carrying out his will, it is simply impossible for the public to do so.

There is no such thing as mass initiative, mass thought and mass action. All initiative, thought and action must be individual. It is impossible for the public to initiate anything. It can only endorse or condemn proposals initiated by individuals or representatives. Therefore the fundamental idea of a pure or direct democracy is a phantom of the mind.

It was the discovery of these facts, after a long and bloody struggle through history in which direct democracies, time and again, degenerated convulsively into monarchies that resulted in giving birth to the American system of representative democracy.

The fathers of the Republic had all the experience and wisdom of the ages to guide them when they framed our federal constitution and founded this Republic and their work was the

greatest governmental achievement of enlightened statesmanship in any age and a great forward step in the advancement of civilization. The statesmen of the Revolutionary period knew that a pure or direct democracy had proved a failure in all history.

They knew that the ancients had never discovered a workable system of government between the *extremes* of a pure democracy which was a *failure* and an aristocracy or a monarchy, both of which curtailed individual liberty and deprived the great mass of the people of a controlling voice in the affairs of their government.

They knew that an aristocracy and a monarchy had stability and reliability but was a tyranny, and so they aimed to found a government which had all the good features of a democracy, which left the final control of the government in the hands of the people, but which at the same time possessed the efficiency and stability of a monarchy, and so they planned to make the people themselves the monarch, with certain necessary checks, balances and limitations, the same to be fixed in a written constitution. They accomplished this result by engrafting representation upon democracy.

This was a new form of government unknown to the ancients and the fathers of the Republic were the first practical exponents of a perfected system of representative democracy. They were a galaxy of the greatest statesmen ever assembled at a given time to frame a constitution and found a government.

Gladstone summed up the verdict of enlightened statesmanship on their work when he said:

The American Constitution is the most wonderful work ever struck off at a given time by the brain and purpose of man.

In his recent work, "The State and the Citizen," Lord Selborne points out the superiority of the American Constitution over all others by reason of its stability and permanence and then he says:

But in England we remain without definite safeguards in our Constitution. The gravest of our constitutional laws can be altered as easily as the dog tax, while much of the Constitution is so uncertain and indefinite that there is the strongest temptation for politicians to change it at any moment of political excitement.

The statesmen of the Revolutionary period understood all about this old system of a pure democracy which is now brought forward as a new form of government and as a panacea for all our ills.

Let me call your attention to the remarks of just one statesman upon this subject. In the debate in the Massachusetts State Convention which ratified the federal constitution, Fisher Ames, one of the greatest statesmen of the Revolutionary period who in his time was called the "Burke of America," said:

Much has been said about the people divesting themselves of power, when they delegate it to representatives; and that all representation is to their disadvantage, because it is but an image, a copy, fainter and more imperfect than the original, the people, in whom the light of power is primary and unborrowed, which is only reflected by their delegates.

I cannot agree to either of these opinions. The representation of the people is something more than the people. I know, sir, but one purpose which the people can effect without delegation, and that is to destroy a government. That they cannot erect a government, is evinced by our being assembled here on their behalf. The people must govern by a majority, with whom all power resides. But how is the sense of this majority to be obtained. It has been said that a pure democracy is the best government for a small people who assemble in person. It is of small consequence to discuss it, as it would be inapplicable to the great country we inhabit. It may be of some use in this argument, however, to consider, that it would be very burdensome, subject to faction and violence; decisions would often be made by surprise, in the precipitancy of passion, by men who either understand nothing or care nothing about the subject; or by interested men, or those who vote for their own indemnity. It would be a government not by laws, but by men.

Such were the paltry democracies of Greece and Asia Minor, so much extolled, and so often proposed as a model for our imitation. I desire to be thankful that our people are not under any temptation to adopt the advice. I think it will not be denied that the people are gainers by the election of representatives. They may destroy, but

they cannot exercise, the powers of government in person, but by thir servants they govern; they do not renounce their power; they do not sacrifice their rights; they become the true sovereigns of the country when they delegate that power, which they cannot use themselves to their trustees.

In discussing the importance of constitutional representative government to protect the rights of individuals and the rights of the minority, Ames said:

I know, sir, that the people talk about the liberty of nature, and assert that we divest ourselves of a portion of it when we enter into society. This is declamation against matter of fact. We cannot live without society; and as to liberty, how can I be said to enjoy that which another may take from me when he pleases? The liberty of one depends not so much on the removal of all restraint from him, as on the due restraint upon the liberties of others. Without such restraint, there can be no liberty.

Lord Acton, one of the most learned men of all time, has well said:

The most certain test by which we judge whether a country is really free is the amount of security enjoyed by minorities.

Let me call your attention to a fact which is always overlooked by impractical political reformers. No constitutional provision, no law, no system of primaries will ever help the people to secure good government unless they use the election machinery provided. They must themselves be responsible for the election of honest, intelligent and fit representatives. Such representatives can only be selected when the people take a sufficient interest in politics to obtain reliable and accurate information in regard to the qualifications of candidates. They must first ascertain the fitness of candidates for the duties they will be called upon to discharge and then they must supplement this with sufficient energy and activity to go to the primaries and vote for the best candidates. This process of selecting candidates can be operated better under the open caucus and convention system than under any other system ever invented by the wit of man. Not only this but it can be operated at a much less expense to both the candidates and the people.

The only way the people can secure good government is by

taking enough interest in politics and public affairs to correctly inform themselves relative to the ability and fitness of candidates. In addition to this they must have the energy and civic zeal to go to the primaries and select such candidates for public office. This is all that it is necessary for the people to do under our enlightened representative system to secure the best results and obtain the best government.

But if the people will not do this, if they are indifferent, if they are absorbed in their own private affairs and neglect their civic duties and allow inefficient and incompetent men to be nominated and elected it is not the fault of the system but it is the fault of the people themselves. You cannot remedy this fault in the people by destroying their government. You cannot remedy this fault in the people by breaking down our enlightened system of representative democracy. Those who are trying to do this are the architects of disaster. Their scheme of a pure or direct democracy has been a failure in all history. It is a political fallacy that has deluged the earth with blood. The advocates of this doctrine make the absurd contention that the only way to secure good government is to go out upon the streets, collect hungry ignorance and set it upon the throne. Could anything be more ridiculous or absurd?

The advocates of this system may be divided into three classes: First, political novices; second, crack-brained political theorists; third, office-seeking demagogues.

The first two classes are entitled to our sympathy, the latter class should have our contempt. Their whole aim is to flatter ignorance in order to secure its support for public office, believing that it is in the majority. They may be right from a selfish standpoint but they are traitors to American institutions and to our enlightened representative democracy which is the best system of government ever instituted among men.

What this country needs is education in the fundamental principles of government. The people have had no education upon this subject since the Civil War. But few statesmen in the country have read the American Constitution in the past twenty-five years. There has been no occasion for it until recently. Not until 1892 was there any man or set of men in this country who had the audacity to attack the virtues of our representative de-

mocracy. The first attack was made in 1892 by the National Socialist Labor party in its platform in the following words:

First Demand: The people to have the right to propose laws and vote upon all measures of importance according to the referendum principle.

In this election Simon Wing, the Socialist labor candidate for president, received in the whole country in round numbers, 21,000 votes.

The next attack made upon our system of government was made in the national platform of the Populist party in 1896, as follows:

We favor the system of direct legislation through the initiative and referendum.

It will be remembered that the Populist or People's party, now defunct, endorsed Bryan's candidacy for president in 1896 and he accepted the nomination upon that platform. He saw in the revival of this old discarded system of a pure democracy an opportunity to flatter and fool the people. He immediately seized upon it and set up the cry, "Let the people rule." He at once became the imitator and echo of the demagogues of the ancient democracies. Since that time there has been a spirited rivalry between the demagogues of all parties to see who could go the farthest towards breaking down our representative democracy and reviving the old discarded form of mobocracy.

It was William Jennings Bryan, the original "big noise," (Roosevelt is the carbon copy) who declared that this system of government was the divine method of restoring the rule of the people. Since that time the political skirt-dancers of all parties have been parrot-like repeating the refrain until it became the chief slogan of the Big Bull Moose at Armageddon.

From whence came this cry, "Let the people rule." It originated in the breast of our primitive ancestors. The first Simian hypocrite who amused himself swinging on his tail in the branches of trees was the first demagogue who set up this cry, and it has been the favorite slogan of office-seeking demagogues and gallery-playing hypocrites in all ages. It is the first subterfuge of the office-seeker and the last refuge of the bankrupt politician.

If we want to learn about a pure or direct democracy we must go back to ancient times—back to the Athenian democracy. If we want to know the truth about it we must turn our attention from the cheap demagogues of our day and go back and study a pure democracy in the light of history. Aristotle has given us a vivid picture of the rise and fall of democracies.

Athens was the pride and glory of the ancient world. She excelled in education, culture, art and literature, and was the intellectual center of the world. But, let it be remembered, that Athens was a small city, and when she was at the zenith of her power and fame she was flourishing under the middle deliberative forms of democracy described by Aristotle. When she threw off the restrait of constitution and of law, and substituted in their place passion, noise, confusion and hysteria and was led by demagogues her decline and ruin rapidly followed. When she had a deliberative form of democracy and followed the lead of such statesmen as Pericles and when the masses were swayed by his superior intelligence, judgment and statesmanship then Athens flourished, because Pericles was her great and trusted representative. But what happened to Athens when Pericles and statesmen of his character were relegated to the rear, as we are now relegating statesmen to the rear, when the demagogues of Athens came forward, as the demagogues in this country are now coming forward? Her prosperity was blighted, her intellectual light was extinguished, her glory faded into a memory.

Under the Athenian pure democracy the people killed their best and most successful generals, they plundered the rich until the rich were compelled to conspire with the public enemy, and they finally crowned their guilt with the martyrdom of Socrates. It was John Jay, who speaking of a pure democracy, said:

If every Athenian citizen had been a Socrates, every Athenian assembly would still have been a mob.

The most famous recall case in history was when the mob recalled the decision of Pilate and forced the crucifixion of Christ.

What is the mob? When passion wrests the scepter from reason the people become the mob. When reason is restored the mob again becomes the people.

The fathers of this Republic invented representative government to put reason upon the throne and keep it there. Their wisdom and statesmanship has never been excelled.

So long as we have manhood suffrage, so long as we balance the head of the illiterate against the head of the intelligent and educated, so long as we balance the head of the fool against the head of the political sage and philosopher, so long as we balance the head of the criminal against the head of the minister of the gospel, so long as we balance the empty head of the boy of twenty-one against the head of the trained statesman with half a century of accumulated experience and wisdom, just so long must we have legislation and government by representatives—by representatives chosen on account of their experience, character and ability, as well as their training, fitness and skill for the particular duties which they will be called upon to perform. These representatives must be selected by the masses, who, if it were not physically impossible for them to assemble and act for themselves, which *it is*, have neither the training, the knowledge or the capacity, to engage in the complicated and technical conduct of the details of legislation and of government.

Let us make no mistake about it. This country is facing the greatest crisis since the Civil War. Our representative institutions are in danger. Masked treason is striking at the heart of our federal constitution. The recall of judicial decisions is the most dangerous proposal presented in this country since secession reared its ugly head to dismember the Union. It is a treacherous blow at the heart of our institutions. It threatens the independence of the judiciary. Its whole aim is the destruction of that citadel of liberty. After destroying the judicial establishment it is then proposed to make the confusion of the multitude the final interpreter of the law and the passion of the populace the final arbiter of justice. No more ridiculous and dangerous proposal ever emanated from a demented ambition since civilization banished political barbarism.

In the present crisis it is just as important that every patriot should respond to the defense of our representative institutions and fight for the preservation of our constitution as it was for them to rush to the defense of the Union when it was attacked by secession and treason. The danger of the present is as great

as the danger of the past. It is not so apparent to the average citizen, but it is just as apparent to the student of history. It will require all the intelligence, the patience and the wisdom of the American people together with the highest statesmanship of our country to solve the great problems which now confront us.

Government founded on law, order, and progress will be supported by every patriot, but government by hysteria, tumult and anarchy will be supported by every office-seeking demagogue. The demand of the hour is:

"God give us men; a time like this demands
Strong minds, great hearts, true faith and ready hands;
Men whom the lust of office does not kill;
Men whom the spoils of office cannot buy;
Men who possess opinions and a will;
Men who have honor—men who will not lie;
Men who can stand before a demagogue,
And damn his treacherous flatteries without winking!
Tall men, sun-crowned, who live above the fog
In public duty and in private thinking."

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